

U.S Embassy Dakar
Warden Message
Alert for Possible Demonstrations on March 19, 2011

March 16, 2011

The U.S. Embassy in Dakar has learned that opposition supporters are planning major demonstrations in Dakar on Saturday, March 19, specifically around the Presidential Palace and Place de l'Indépendance. The date coincides with the 11th anniversary of the second round of elections that brought President Abdoulaye Wade to power in 2000. These demonstrations are highly publicized and anticipated to bring crowds from outside of Dakar.

The Government of Senegal has denied permits to the organizers to hold demonstrations, but organizers have promised that the demonstrations will take place despite the lack of approval. President Wade's ruling party (PDS) has announced they will be celebrating the day with a series of events across the country.

Organizers have called for the demonstrations to be peaceful. Regardless, tensions are likely to be high and any clashes between groups of protestors and/or the police have the possibility of becoming violent. Recent demonstrations in Dakar have included streets blocked with burning tires; rocks thrown at cars, vehicles burned and aggressive use of tear gas by responding police.

Travel plans should be amended to account for the possibility of protests and/or ensuing delays in these affected areas. We remind U.S. citizens that even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can quickly and without much advance warning turn confrontational and escalate into violence. The Embassy, therefore, urges U.S. citizens to avoid crowds, political gatherings, and street demonstrations, even if they appear to be peaceful, and to exercise caution if within the vicinity of any demonstrations. U.S. citizens should stay current with media coverage of local events and be aware of their surrounding at all times.

You can stay in touch and get Embassy updates by checking the U.S. Embassy Dakar website (<http://dakar.usembassy.gov/>). You can also get global updates at the U.S. Department of State's, Bureau of Consular Affairs website where you can find the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information (http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1013.html). If

you don't have internet access, we have a call center for updates--1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada, or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except federal holidays).

If you are going to live in or travel to Senegal, please take the time to tell us about your trip by enrolling in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP - <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>). If you enroll, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. You should remember to keep all of your information in STEP up to date. It is important during enrollment or updating of information to include your current phone number and current email address where you can be reached in case of an emergency.

The U.S. Embassy in Dakar is located on at Avenue Jean XXIII, Dakar; the mailing address is B.P. 49, Dakar, Senegal. If you have questions or concerns about safety or related issues, you are encouraged to contact the consular section at the Embassy by sending an email message to consulardakar@state.gov . The Embassy telephone number is (221) 33 829-2100.

For after-hours emergencies, U.S. citizens should call (221) 33-829-2109 and ask to speak with the duty officer.